

**Suzan Johnson Cook**

Ambassador

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Term of Appointment: 05/16/2011 to present

Suzan D. Johnson Cook was sworn in as Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom on May 16, 2011.

Prior to joining the State Department, Ambassador Johnson Cook served as the senior pastor and CEO of the Bronx Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in New York City from 1996-2010. She was also the founder and president of Wisdom Women Worldwide Center and the owner of Charisma Speakers.

In 1993, Johnson Cook was a White House Fellow on the Domestic Policy Council. In that role, she advised President Bill Clinton on a range of issues including homelessness, violence, and community empowerment. She also worked with the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development on faith initiatives from 1994 until 1997. President Clinton appointed her in 1997 to serve on his National Initiative on Race as its only faith advisor.

Johnson Cook held the position of Chaplain to the New York City Police Department for twenty-one years, the only woman to serve in that role. She was also a founder and board member of the Multi-Ethnic Center in New York City. From 1983-1996, she served as Senior Pastor to the Mariners Temple Baptist Church, and was a professor at New York Theological Seminary from 1988-1996.

Johnson Cook has travelled to five continents to promote religious freedom. She has led interfaith delegations to Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and throughout the Caribbean. She worked with World Vision in Ruschlikon, Switzerland in its efforts to combat global poverty, and travelled to Zimbabwe and South Africa to meet with Zulu faith leaders to promote interfaith dialogue and tolerance. As a young woman, Johnson Cook worked with Operation Crossroads Africa, where she participated in a cross-cultural exchange with student groups in Ghana and Nigeria. She also spent time living and studying in Valencia, Spain.

Johnson Cook is the recipient of several awards, including the Woman of Conscience Award, the Martin Luther King Award, the Visionary Leaders Award, and has also authored ten books. She received her Bachelor of Science in Speech from Emerson College in Boston in 1976 and a Master of Arts from Columbia University Teachers College in New York City in 1978. She completed a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, in 1983 and 1990, respectively. She was also the recipient of Harvard University's President's Administrative Fellowship from 1990-1991.